Pol 14 Viet S (1487)

Department of State TELEGRAM

CONFIDENTIAL 228

7-24-71 Saigon 11722

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ACTION EA-20

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-08 L-04 NSAE-00
NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-20 USIA-12 UPW-01 IO-16
AID-28 CU-05 RSR-01 /142 W
031197

R 240930Z JUL 71
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7758
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
CINCPAC
AMCONSUL DANANG
USDEL FRANCE
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Zucker DATE 1/26/82
RDS☐ or XDS☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED☑ RELEASABLE☑
RELEASE DENIED☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 11722

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

KATHMANDU OR AMBASSADOR BUNKER

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION DEVELOPMENTS

REF: A. SAIGON 11659 Pol 14 Viet S
B. SAIGON 11598

1. SUMMARY: A KY STAFFER PUBLICLY STATED THAT THE VICE PRESIDENT NOW HAS OBTAINED LESS THAN 30 ENDORSEMENTS FOR HIS CANDIDACY. GENERAL MINH TOLD UPI REPORTER JULY 22 THAT HE DID NOT CALL FOR AMBASSADOR BUNKER'S RESIGNATION AND THAT HE DOES NOT WISH TO BE PRESIDENT BUT FEELS HE SHOULD ENTER THE RACE ANYWAY. PRESIDENT THIEU HAS REPORTEDLY ASSERTED THAT HE WILL NOT RUN AS A CANDIDATE IF THE PEOPLE DO NOT ACCEPT HIS "FOUR NOES POLICY." MILITANT STUDENT LEADER NGUYEN VAN MAM HAS CALLED FOR THE RESIGNATION OF PRESIDENT THIEU IN ORDER TO REMOVE AN OBSTACLE TO PEACE. END SUMMARY.

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2. KY CAMPAIGN: NGUYEN THIEN NHON, A SENIOR KYHOAMPAIGN AIDE, TOLD LOCAL REPORTERS JULY 22 THAT VICE PRESIDENT KY NOW HAS LESS THAN 30 PRESIDENTIAL ENDORSEMENTS. (NHON PRESUMABLY IS REFERRING TO THE NUMBER OF VERIFIED, SIGNED ENDORSEMENTS FROM PROVINCIAL COUNCILORS AND THUS HIS ESTIMATE WOULD GENERALLY ACCORD WITH RECENT INFORMATION FROM KY ASSOCIATES LE VAN THAI AND DANG DUC KHOI, REFTELS.) NHON ALSO RECALLED THAT KY "HAS THREATENED TO PULL OUT OF THE RACE IF ADEQUATE GUARANTEES FOR A FAIR ELECTION ARE NOT PROVIDED," BUT NOTED THAT "HE DOESN'T BELIEVE" THAT KY CAN NOW OVERCOME HIS DIFFICULTIES IN COLLECTING VERIFIED ENDORSEMENTS.

3. MINH CAMPAIGN: IN JOINT INTERVIEW JULY 22 WITH UPI, MONTREAL STAR AND UNIDENTIFIED GERMAN CORRESPONDENT, GENERAL MINH DENIED THAT IN RECENT PRESS INTERVIEWS HE HAD CALLED FOR THE RESIGNATION OF AMBASSADOR BUNKER AND COMPLAINED THAT HE HAD BEEN "MISINTERPRETED." (COMMENT: MINH'S UPI STATEMENT REPRESENTS THE FIRST PUBLIC CLARIFICATION BY HIM OF REMARKS REPORTED BY AP JULY 15.) UPI CORRESPONDENT KILGORE TOLD EMBOFF JULY 23 THAT MINH STATED HE WOULD FILE HIS CANDIDACY ON JULY 29 AND WOULD NOT REVEAL NAME OF HIS RUNNING MATE UNTIL THAT TIME.

4. IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, DEPUTY NGUYEN HUU CHUNG, MINH'S SPOKESMAN, ISSUED PRESS RELEASE JULY 20 DENYING THAT MINH HAD PREDICTED A COUP IF THIEU WERE REELECTED IN AN INTERVIEW WITH TIME MAGAZINE JULY 15. CHUNG STATED THAT MINH NOW HAS 34 INDORSEMENTS AND OFFICIALLY ACCUSED LH CHAIRMAN OF REFUSING TO VERIFY MINH ENDORSEMENTS FROM LHI DEPUTIES. ALSO LE VAN THAI, KY'S CAMPAIGN MANAGER, TOLD EMBOFFS JULY 22 THAT MINH SO FAR HAS NO VERIFIED ENDORSEMENTS FROM THE LOWER HOUSE DEPUTIES. (COMMENT: IF TRUE, SPEAKER LUONG MAY BE REFUSING VALIDATION ON THE TECHNICALLY CORRECT GROUNDS THAT THE ENDORSEMENTS FOR MINH PROBABLY DO NOT YET IDENTIFY HIS VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. THERE ARE NO OTHER INDICATIONS THAT ANYONE IS TRYING TO BLOCK MINH'S CANDIDACY.)

5. THIEU'S CAMPAIGN: MEETING WITH ARVN VETERANS OF THE CAMBODIAN OPERATIONS, JULY 21, PRESIDENT THIEU REPORTEDLY STATED THAT "HE IS READY TO QUIT IF A MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE WANT A COALITION WITH THE COMMUNISTS OR NEUTRALITY" AND THAT HE "WOULD NOT RUN AGAIN IF HIS 'FOUR NOES POSITION' DOES NOT RECEIVE THE PEOPLE'S COOPERATION AND IF CONDITIONS ARE NOT APPROPRIATE TO

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IMPLEMENT THIS POSITION." HE REPORTEDLY INSISTED THAT "THERE IS ONLY ONE SOLUTION TO THE VIET-NAM PROBLEM: "WITHDRAWAL OF ALL NVA FORCES AND DISARMAMENT OF THE VIET CONG." (COMMENT: THIEU EVIDENTLY IS PRESSING THE "FOUR NOES" POLICY AS A HARDLINE ANTI-COMMUNIST CAMPAIGN STAND AND IS CURRENTLY MAKING LITTLE REFERENCE TO THE MODERATE GVN NEGOTIATING POSITION.)

6. STUDENTS CALL FOR THIEU'S RESIGNATION: IN A DECLARATION ISSUED JULY 20, MILITANT STUDENT LEADER HUYNH TAN MAM CALLED FOR PRESIDENT THIEU TO RESIGN AND "THUS REMOVE AN OBSTACLE TO THE SEARCH FOR PEACE." MAM ALSO PRAISED MADAME BINH'S RECENT 7 POINT PROPOSAL AND URGED PRESIDENT NIXON TO APPROVE IT. A SOUTHERN BUDDHIST STUDENT GROUP ISSUED A SIMILAR DECLARATION JULY 23.
BERGER.